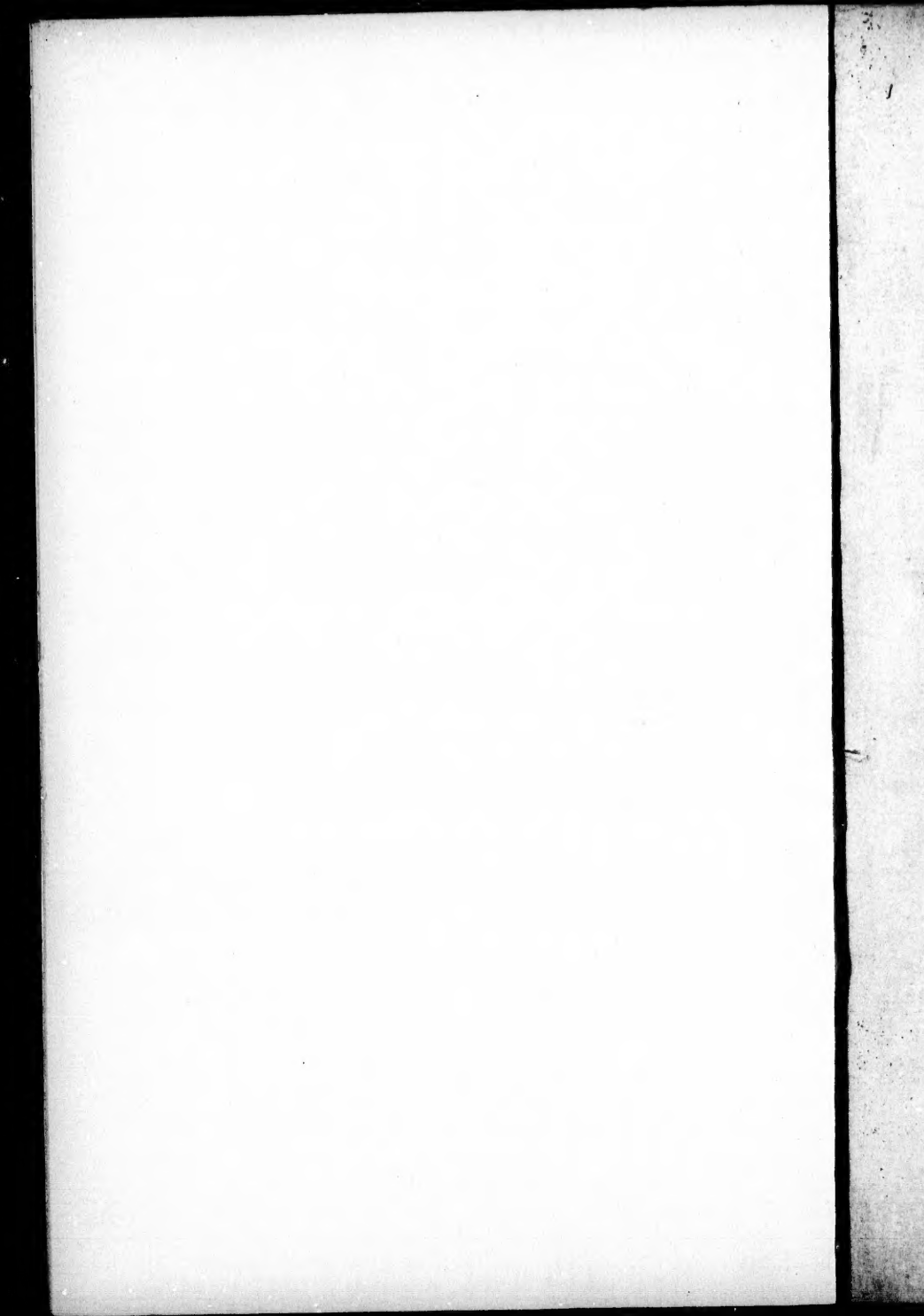




A CHARGE

TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC,

DELIVERED

AT THE VISITATION IN

MONTREAL, Lower Canada, 9th August,

KINGSTON, Upper Canada, 23d Aug

YORK, Upper Canada, 5th Sept.

IN THE YEAR 1832.

BY

CHARLES JAMES STEWART, D. D.

BISHOP OF QUEBEC.

QUEBEC:

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1834.

1877

TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF QUEBEC,

THIS CHARGE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS INSCRIBED WITH SINCERE AFFECTION AND RESPECT,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER,

C. J. QUEBEC.

1871

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A CHARGE,

&c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

Through the providence and the grace of God I am enabled once more to meet you on the solemn occasion of our assembling in one place, for the mutual purposes of consulting together, and edifying one another. May God's Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, guide and govern us in all our thoughts, words and actions !

The glory of God, the increase of His Church, the benefit of our own souls, and of all souls which we can in any way reach, are the important objects to which our attention and endeavours should be directed. To promote these results the means are numerous. It will therefore be necessary that I select those topics for our consideration which affect interests very extensive

in their nature and consequences, and which are in many respects peculiar to the circumstances of this Diocese. When I last addressed you on a similar occasion, I treated of subjects of universal importance ; the duties of Ministers to their flocks, as to public worship, the sacraments and ordinances of the Church ; their elevation above the things of this world ; and the necessity of their being examples of the believers in all respects. At present, the times are extraordinary, the condition of the United Church of England and Ireland, with regard to its establishment, support, and means, not satisfactory ; the want and demand of more labourers in the vineyard here are urgent, and the supplies for the support of Clergymen in this country in danger of being diminished rather than increased. Under existing circumstances, I deem it to be my duty to take particular notice of these points, as excitements to our humility, zeal, and disinterestedness in the cause of God and his Church ; and with a view of directing our thoughts and prayers to the conduct we should pursue in our present situation, and of making preparation and provision for future contingencies, necessities and wants—temporal and spiritual, which may reasonably be contemplated.

The opportunity of my speaking to you in public assembly on these topics has been delayed, owing to the circumstances which called me last year to England ; for I fully intended to have holden a visitation last summer. My visit, however, to the Mother Country has, I believe, afforded me some advantage in treating of the subjects which I have mentioned, as it enabled me to acquire information which had a bearing upon them, as well as to communicate it to influential persons at home. The knowledge which I obtained is rather of a disappointing character. I found that His Majesty's Ministers were so situated as to conceive themselves obliged to reduce the allowances which had formerly been given to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, for the support of the Church in this part of the world ; and that they were not prepared to come to any definite measure with regard to the disposal or appropriation of the Clergy Reserved Lands, and the revenues which arise from them. The Parliamentary grant to the Society has, I believe, been reduced ; and the measures proposed * since my return to this

* A Bill to repeal certain parts of an Act passed in the 31st year of His late Majesty Geo. III. chap. 31. in so far as the same relates to reserves of land for a Protestant Clergy in Canada, and for other purposes, was introduced in 1832, by Message from His Majesty into the Provincial Parliaments of Upper and Lower Canada, but did not pass in the House of Assembly of either Province.

country respecting the lands, are not calculated to give satisfaction.

When I was in London, I presented to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, a scheme of appropriation by sale and endowment of somewhat more than one half of the Lands Reserved for the maintenance of a Protestant Clergy, in the hope that it might be speedily adopted. It was kindly received, but no encouragement was given me to lead to an expectation that the plan would be put into execution. In drawing up the scheme, I was greatly indebted to the Reverend Alex. Bethune, Missionary at Cobourg, for the information and assistance which he afforded me; and it is with pleasure that I avail myself of this opportunity of acknowledging his services in this and other matters connected with the first interests of the Diocese.

One circumstance which occurred during my residence in England I am happy to communicate. An application, simultaneous with one from my brother Bishop of Nova Scotia, was made by me to a quarter which we have always found ready to assist us to the utmost of their power—I mean the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

I represented to that venerable body, that their grant to me in 1827, to the amount of £300, had been exceedingly useful in these Provinces, but that it had for some time been exhausted. With their usual generosity they placed £500 at my disposal, for the further promotion of the designs of the Society. At the same time they voted a like sum to the Bishop of Nova Scotia. And not long before making these grants they had, in consequence of a representation laid before them of the formation of a Sunday School Society in this Diocese, sent a donation of books to the four central Committees, viz: at Quebec, Montreal, York, and Kingston. We are all, I am confident, very sensible of their bounty, and shall be happy to co-operate together in making the best improvement of it, in gratitude to them, and in conformity with our own desires and obligations. Permit me to exhort you to further their benevolent designs, by promoting, as much as you can, in your respective congregations, the circulation and distribution of the Bible, the Books and Tracts of the Society, and the purchase and use of the Book of Common Prayer. It will give me pleasure to distribute their talents intrusted to me. Here, however, I shall mention that at the time the last grant was made to me, I was nearly £200 in their debt; and that I have, at

their request, promised to give assistance from this fund to the Society formed at York, for converting and civilizing the Indians, and propagating the Gospel among the destitute Settlers in Upper Canada.

This new Society claims our attention, and I am engaged to recommend it to your consideration and support. It is unnecessary to enlarge on the duty of extending our services to the spiritual benefit of the poor Indians, a duty, which I fear we must confess has been too much neglected by us, and one to the prosecution of which we are now particularly called. The claims on our services of the destitute Settlers are not less obvious, and I cannot entertain a doubt of our inclination to meet them to the utmost extent of our power. For the accomplishment of these objects it will be expedient that Committees or Auxiliary Societies be established in different parts of the Diocese, and that a plan should be drawn up and well digested of co-operation with the Society at York.

The Sunday School Society for the Diocese also demands our notice. Scarcely any thing can be more conducive to the interests of true religion than the institution of Sunday Schools.

They begin and carry on the work of instruction in the soil most easy and profitable for cultivation. They are with facility spread over the country; and the benefit of them extends not to the scholars only, but also to the families of the young people taught in them, and to the teachers themselves; for it is a just observation, that every one in teaching others is sure to gain instruction himself. For the support, and the promotion of the best system of conducting them, it is very desirable that a well organized plan of instruction, and a combined effort for raising the means necessary to meet the expenses incident to them, should be pursued throughout the Diocese. A scheme for the attainment of this object was some time since prepared by a Committee chosen for the purpose at Quebec. And I take pleasure in mentioning our obligations to one of our brethren, the Reverend George Archbold, Missionary at Cornwall, at that time Visiting Missionary of the Diocese, who first conceived this design, and afforded great assistance in the prosecution of it. The scheme will be shortly submitted to you; and I am happy in anticipating your approbation of it and your cordial co-operation in carrying its provisions into effect. May God bless and give increase to our united endeavours to bring up the youth committed to us, in an

habitual observance and improvement of his Sabbaths, and in the fear and love of His holy name !

It has been mentioned that in furtherance of the designs of the Sunday School Society, a donation of books to the four central Committees has been received from the Parent Society, for Promoting Christian knowledge ; and I am happy to inform you that in support of the same object, the Venerable Society P. G. F. P. have given £200. Nearly the whole of this sum has been expended in printing elementary tracts and cards of instruction for the use of the Society, which were partly drawn up by the Committee at Quebec.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts have also adopted measures for the maintenance of a body of Catechists in this Diocese, a provision which cannot fail of being highly beneficial to the Church in those places where the services of a Minister are not yet afforded to the people ; and also in rendering subsidiary aid where those services are scattered over an extensive and populous mission. Great care must be taken in making a selection of men well suited to so responsible an office, and the

Clergy must be watchful not to recommend any person in whom they cannot confide, under the full persuasion, from ample knowledge and experience of his character, that he will prove a diligent, devout and judicious catechist. Schoolmasters may be appointed to the office, but in all cases the pay of those who undertake it will be proportioned to their capacities, and the extent of their services, to the best of our knowledge. To meet the expense of this provision for the benefit of the Church, the Society have authorised me to draw upon the Treasurer for the payment of salaries thus incurred to the extent of £500 per annum, and the charge upon this account in the Diocese amounts now to nearly that sum.— It is unquestionably a judicious and important appropriation; it is another instance of the liberal and fostering care of the Society in supporting our establishment: we acknowledge it with gratitude; and we shall, I trust, under God's blessing, make good improvement of it to the increase of His Church.

The last topics mentioned exhibit the generosity of the Societies in England, and also the exertions made here to form new Societies, viz: that for converting and civilizing the Indians, and propagating the Gospel among destitute settlers,

and that for the establishment of Sunday Schools throughout the Diocese. But I have observed that the condition of the Church at home is not satisfactory, and that our prospects of increase, not to say continuance of usual support, are not encouraging, and this at a time when we particularly need assistance. The language which under existing circumstances is held by His Majesty's Government, and the policy which it is thought necessary to pursue, promise no increase, but threaten a diminution of funds. I would fain, however, hope that the extent of the Emigration to this country, and the encouragement given to it, may induce the advisers of His Majesty to take into consideration the spiritual wants of the new and destitute settlers, and cause a special grant to be made for their particular benefit.

The Clergy Reserved lands cannot very soon, consistently with their good management, be made available to the extent of our wants. It is to be hoped that some plan for their appropriation will soon be fixed on, that they may without delay benefit us in some degree.* It is a provision

* Since the reduction of the annual Parliamentary grant in 1832, with a view to its entire discontinuance after the year 1834, the salaries of the Clergy of Upper-Canada have been in part defrayed, by the direction of His Majesty's Government, out of the proceeds of the Clergy Reserved Lands. And at this present time their salaries are paid, to the extent which the funds will allow, from this source. We have reason to be thankful for these acts of justice and kindness towards us.

which has been made by the Government for the Clergy, and it is to be regretted that so many obstacles have interfered with the improvement of this property. It is not, however, my intention to impute blame in any quarter with regard to the obstacles and delays which we have to lament. It was not easy to adopt any efficient plan, or to fix a just value upon them, especially while the emigration to these Provinces was inconsiderable, and the country was not flourishing to the extent in which it has prospered of late years. That the Government of a country should provide for the support of the Church is, I am persuaded the opinion of His present Majesty and his Ministers. That the people should contribute in some way to the maintenance of the Clergy, is to me manifest: it is not less so, at the same time, that the Ministers of God in the land should not be entirely dependent upon the voluntary contributions of the people. As long as the majority of the people are unrighteous, it cannot be expected that due support will be properly given to the maintenance of the Ministers of religion. Much has been said about the United States affording an example tending to a different conclusion, but I believe that a fair view of the subject will not bring us to this result. In that part of the States where the Protestant Episcopal

Church is in the most flourishing condition, it has considerable funds independent of popular contribution ; and where the Congregational Church is best supported, it has resources granted by law ; and after all, the provision for the support of religion, and for the maintenance of Ministers in the greatest part of the United States is lamentably deficient ; and the poor prospect of future provision, is to many of the friends of sound religion in that country, fraught with feelings of solicitude and alarm.

It is not, however, so much incumbent upon me at present to shew it to be a matter of duty and expediency, that the State should support the Church, or that the people should, either in consequence of legal enactment, or of their own good will, contribute to the maintenance of God's Ministers, as to exhort you patiently to submit to the circumstances of privation or disappointment in which you may be placed, and through faith in the divine promises, to contemplate without unnecessary anxiety, the occurrences which may affect your future situation. At the same time, I think we should humbly and respectfully represent to His Majesty's Government, the claims of the Church on their bounty and justice, especially considering the means for her

support which are in their power ; and I am disposed to believe we shall be favorably listened to, and not hardly dealt with. I trust, however, that whatever may be the aspect of the times, you are not anxious about your own worldly condition ; that you are willing to work, and that cheerfully, without due recompence from man, putting your trust in God, who rules over all things, provides for his people in the way best for them, and who has declared that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church, the mystical body of Christ. That Church will be visible in the world till his kingdom of glory come ; and in the mean time he will feed his flock. Be watchful only that you and your people belong to his fold. Keep the enemy out of it—the evil one, sin and its train of mischief, to the utmost of your power : sin only separates between us and our God ; and “if God be for us, who can be against us ?” Not that we should be careless altogether for the things of this world, for ourselves and those who may follow us, but that they should not predominate in our heart and mind. We are taught to provide for our own, and specially for those of our own house :* “Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.”† It is the duty of those who partake of

* 1 Tim. V. 8.

† Cor. IX. 14

spiritual things, to minister in carnal things to those who instruct them.* They should know this to be their duty; and the better they are acquainted with their everlasting interests, the more readily they will contribute to the support of God's worship and Ministers. They ought to be called upon to this effect; and so fully am I persuaded of their duty and interest, and that of the Church corresponding in the result of such a call, that I am resolved shortly to issue† a circular to the Clergy of this Diocese, directing them to point out to their congregations their obligations to honor the Lord with their substance, in giving a part of it towards the support of the services of the sanctuary and those who perform them. Where the people can afford to do this, it is obviously their duty. In some places they cannot, owing to their recent settlement, and the poorness of their circumstances; and in others they may be engaged for a season in building a church, and so in this way providing for the worship of God in his holy house. But where the people are "dwelling in cieled houses," and also have churches to assemble in, they should give a part of their substance in support of their Minister, in duty to him and themselves, and in

* Cor. IX. 11, and Gal. VI. 6.

† I was prevented from acting upon this resolution till the present year, 1834.

order that a portion of his salary received from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, may be applied towards the maintenance of Missionaries, where the settlers are numerous, and they are yet unable to contribute to such an object. This is surely consistent with the right order of things, at least in the present condition of a great proportion of this country, where the accession to the population is great and extraordinary, and the means of the people for their own subsistence very limited ; and where the public resources in support of the church are deficient, and the provision for the maintenance of the Clergy is in an unsettled and precarious state. All persons are stewards accountable to God for the property or the goods which they possess ; and they should give a portion to the support of his Church ; and the most obvious and profitable way of performing this duty, is contributing to the maintenance of their own Minister. It is good to give to the preaching of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but certainly we should see this, in a measure at least, provided for in our own place and neighbourhood, before we send our means for the advancement of this object to any other part of the world. I feel myself called upon to recommend this point of duty to you and your people, wherever any considerable number of

them are raised above dependance on labour for providing the common necessities and comforts of life. This has been already done in several places, and it is an example to be followed. It may not be free from objection in some respects, but what is so altogether? It is immediately intended as a relief to the Society to enable them to bestow their bounty upon destitute places; but the principle of contribution to the support of religion, which it involves, is in itself necessary to be cultivated, as being in plain conformity with the revealed will of God.

I do not entertain a thought of projecting any diminution in the salaries of present incumbents. My view of the subject is very different. But I am earnestly desirous of procuring means to increase the number of our Clergy. For the accomplishment of this chief object, we should above all things wish, and work, and pray. I would do my best to add in every possible way to the real comforts of all the Clergy, but my first desire is to promote as far as I can the increase of God's Church, and the salvation of souls, in this part of the vineyard committed to my superintendence. I am anxious, therefore, that more labourers should be hired and sent to cultivate a field so extensive, and at the same

time promising so abundant a harvest. Without Ministers God's word and sacraments cannot be duly dispensed, public worship will not be regularly performed, nor the Sabbath day devoutly observed; and unless these ordinances of the Lord are kept up in the land, religion will not be maintained among the people. Many places are destitute of them: there is in this country a wide uncultivated field for the labours of the Ministry; there is hard work to be performed, and workmen are needed who will labour for a moderate compensation. Missionaries must, of all men, be spiritually minded, and zealous for the salvation of souls; they should be well instructed in the word of God, and able rightly to divide it "in demonstration of the spirit and of power," and possess that knowledge which makes them ready to give every man a reason why he should embrace the faith, hope, and charity of the Gospel. To enable them the better to do this, they should be learned men; and that we may have learned men, literature should be cultivated and encouraged in the country. The estimation of this, and the means for its acquisition in a new country are generally deficient; the mass of the people, at least, are apt to undervalue it. [But in this place, (York, now Toronto, U. C.), I am happy to observe that the means for its ac-

quirement are not wanting; and I hope that they are duly appreciated.] Let us recommend and promote just views of the matter, and although it cannot be expected that the highest attainments in learning should be reached by all the Ministers of the gospel, yet they all should be rich in doctrine, in the knowledge of the principles of religion, and of the distinguishing excellencies of our own Church; they all should excel in that practice which leads men on to perfection, and particularly in a desire and ability to be instruments of communicating to their fellow-creatures the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Here I shall make a few remarks for our mutual edification upon some essentials in preaching the gospel. St. Paul writes, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The cross of God is the power of God to salvation. Conviction of sin and repentance toward God through faith in Jesus Christ, is the beginning of a life unto holiness. That we have no righteousness of our own, and can only be justified by faith in Jesus Christ, is a doctrine necessary to salvation. That a right faith must produce good works, fruit unto holiness, should always be set forth: faith must work by love and keeping

the commandments of God ; this is the new creature ; a heart believing to righteousness is the new heart and spirit, without which no man shall see the Lord. But we have not sufficiency of ourselves, in our fallen and unrenewed nature to think or do any good thing ; we must ask with faith in the name of Jesus Christ, for the Holy Spirit. To teach us to do this, the Gospel is given unto us ; and it promises us the preventing grace and the co-operating grace of God to enable us to make improvement of the powers and talents bestowed upon us for the sake of Jesus Christ, if we do not wilfully resist the Holy Ghost, and neglect so great salvation. Christ died, tasted death for every man, that he might live to the glory of God ; if he will not do so, he will go to hell, and God will finally be glorified by hell itself. " Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God ; " due attention given to that word, and earnest prayer for his special grace, will for Christ's sake be blessed by Him. " Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift ! " Let us preach the whole Gospel in its simplicity, broadness and fulness, not wresting any part to suit any system, form, or formality, dogma or precise view of any human master, but striving to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and

depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Preach peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are nigh. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." "The Kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Promote this kingdom to the utmost of your power in your own hearts and those of your hearers. Be not jealous of other denominations, or needlessly obnoxious to them, taking heed that you do not conflict with the truth, or the peace of God. Be anxious for overcoming sin and evil in every shape, and for magnifying in all things the glory of God ; then, you will be opposed to the devil and wickedness more than to things of inferior importance, upon which we ought not to spend our best strength ; and you will never be inclined to contend for those which are to be ranked among the doctrines and commandments of men. Without compromising in any way the principles or the interests of the Church which you immediately serve, you will study to be quiet, and to do your own business ; and to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," building up yourselves and your flock on holy faith and prayer. Bring the wan-

derers back from the error of their ways to the fold of Christ : proselyte to a right faith the unconverted ; but make the increase of Christian truth and charity your first desire and object ; and they never interfere with each other, but always render mutual assistance in their growth. In this land there is wide room, ample work to engage the Ministers of the Gospel. Open your hearts, stretch and extend the cords of our tents to embrace as many as you can of the children of men within our Zion. Prefer your own Church from conviction, examination, and fair inquiry ; and be ready to defend her institutions, if necessary, "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ;" but avoid all needless controversy ; it is apt to lead to discord and uncharitableness. Press rather plain and essential truths, pure faith, practical religion, trust in God only, through faith in Jesus Christ ; and the influences of the Holy Ghost : so doing you shall both save yourselves, and them that hear you.

I have briefly treated of your primary obligations, the plain and leading points of your duty ; and if I have been induced to dwell upon matters which concern the temporal interests of the Clergy, it is not that I regard these last as equal in import-

ance, but that the circumstances of the Church in the Diocese at this particular moment, make me think it necessary that I should do so. I must now draw to a close, not, however, without noticing the visitation of God at present in this part of the world, in which God so plainly speaks to us all, setting at nought all the skill and wisdom of man; shewing that His will only shall be done, and that without Him, we cannot order any thing.*

The chief rule laid down for us in his holy word, under every calamity is, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him;" that is, believe that it is the dispensation of the Lord for your good; and bear it with patience, and trust in His promises. If we receive it, and apply it in this way, it will certainly be blessed to us. The principal duty of all now present is, to be thankful that we are here; to shew our gratitude to God by making improvement of the chastening of the Lord to the good of our own souls, and those of our neighbours; and by contributing, as far as we can, to the health and comfort of the poor, the sick, and the afflicted. We should shew and teach that we all are strangers and pilgrims here; that this world is a passage to,

* This charge was delivered in the months of August and September, 1832. The Cholera was at its height in June and July, and had not yet entirely subsided.

and a preparation for a better one ; that our treasure, our heart, our life and conversation, should be in Heaven ; that whether we live, or die, we serve the Lord.

This is peculiarly the duty of the Clergy, and above all in this time of visitation you should lead your flocks to the pastures of God's ordinances, to waters springing up to everlasting life, to the cross of Christ, who was lifted up to draw all men to him, to draw them from bondage to sin and the world, and the fear of death, to the glorious liberty of the children of God, to deliverance from evil, and forgiveness of their sins, through faith in his blood, blotting out their iniquities, and to spiritual mindedness, which is life and peace. You should exhort them to pray to God for the Holy Spirit, to read his word, which is able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, to come to the communion of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the Supper of the Lord, a table prepared before us against all our troubles ; to do these things truly believing in the promises of God. If they so do them, they will be happy, always ready to appear before God in any and all of his dispensations, to praise him always ; and you will be blessed in being instruments in his hands of saving souls—immortal souls, heirs

of heaven and a glorious eternity. There is balm in Gilead, there is a physician here; there are sick souls wounded and hurt. Be ye Ministers of Christ to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; and if you are faithful in your preaching, and act accordingly, this year in particular, will be a blessed one to you and to many souls. God grant it for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Let us all, every one here, do our duty to-day, not anxious for the morrow, but always ready for eternity. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof; but if we are doing our duty now, and prepared to give an account to God, not with grief, but with joy, every day will be blessed to us, and our last day on earth, be it near or far off, will minister to us an entrance abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, through whom alone, we have any real grounds of consolation, and who is the sole author of all peace and hope in this life, and of our salvation and everlasting glory in the world to come. Now to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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